

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Old Harwich is a unique place with a rich nautical history and a wealth of fine architecture, which tells a fascinating story of a vibrant and prosperous past. Past centuries have left a great legacy of listed buildings and a diversity and quality of built form, which in parts, is the equal of anything in Europe. The Harwich lighthouse was famously captured on canvas by John Constable in the early 1800's, an image which continues to be enjoyed by visitors to the Tate Gallery in London. The streets of Harwich also relate the lives of diarist Samuel Pepys and Christopher Jones, the Captain of The Mayflower, central figures in the history of the nation. Shifts in global transport patterns and the restructuring of the regional economic base have left Harwich in need of regeneration to stimulate the local economy, improve the quality of life for residents, enhance the built environment and provide Harwich with a sustainable future to match its illustrious past.

The primary intent of this document is to provide a strategic plan for the short, medium and long term regeneration of Old Harwich. An overall vision for the town has been developed, building on the existing strengths to achieve sustainable mixed use development, whilst providing overall themed areas where specific uses will be concentrated.

In simple terms, Industrial activities would be concentrated along the western edges of the quayside, merging into a central quayside area where commercial uses such as restaurants, hotels and retail would be concentrated, moving through to the eastern end of the quayside where residential use would predominate. A visitor mooring facility has been suggested in the short term, to encourage leisure boat visitors to the town and to raise its profile as a attraction in preparation for the long term aim of developing a marina. Proposals to the existing beach and foreshore to the east of the town are focussed on improving recreational and public amenity.

The overall intent however, will be for a mixed use pattern of development with elements of differing use types in each area. A range of options has also been developed for specific key areas of Old Harwich, which are critical to the regeneration of the town namely:

- **The bus/train station and western approaches.**
- **The quayside.**
- **The waterfront/marina.**
- **The beach/foreshore.**
- **The townscape.**

A range of thorough and expansive background work has underpinned this exercise, from the appraisal of all the town's key features and buildings, to the evaluation of all relevant policy and guidance, to a detailed assessment of how the town actually functions in terms of its transport and pedestrian movements. The final proposals illustrated in this document have been developed through a comprehensive analysis, appraisal and a series of development options. The illustrated proposals have been selected and refined through the two consultation periods.

These plans have been established with regard to existing and emerging national, regional and local policy and have been developed to provide the actual fabric for the long-term sustainable development of Harwich, rather than a short term 'face lift' fix. The plans have all been devised in an attempt to focus on the many positive attributes of Old Harwich, and to maximise the environmental, social and economic benefits of these features rather than to introduce any radically new elements into the town. In this way, the character of the existing town can be enhanced and the strong identity of Old Harwich maintained.

